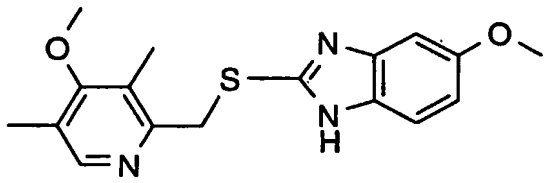
CLAIMS.

1. A process for the manufacture of 5-methoxy-2-[[(4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridinyl)-methyl]-thio]-1H-benzimidazole of formula I

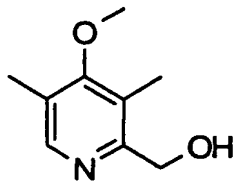


I

from (4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridinyl)-methyl alcohol comprising the following reaction steps carried out in a consecutive order in one main solvent system without isolation of the intermediates formed during the process

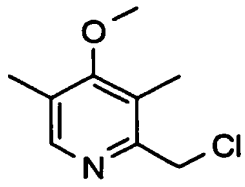
Step 1:

reacting (4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl alcohol (pyrmethyl alcohol) of the formula Ia



Ia

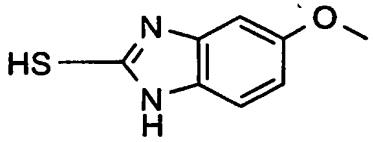
with a chloro-dehydroxylating agent, providing (4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl chloride (pyrmethyl chloride) of the formula Ib



x HCl Ib;

Step 2:

reacting (4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl chloride of the formula Ib, prepared in Step 1 above, with 2-mercapto-5-methoxybenzimidazole (metmercazole) of the formula Ic



Ic

in the presence of a base, providing 5-methoxy-2[[(4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl]thio]-1H-benzimidazole (pyrmetazole) of the formula I

c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that the solvent system, common for the whole reaction sequence, comprises water immiscible organic solvent with a specified amount of between 0.3 and 5.5 mg water / ml water immiscible organic solvent added.

2. A process according to claim 1 wherein the water immiscible organic solvent is toluene.

3. A process according to claim 1 wherein the water immiscible organic solvent is ethyl acetate.

4. A process according to claim 1, characterized in that the specified amount of water is present from the start of the reaction according to Step 1.

5. A process according to any one of claims 1 and 4, characterized in that the specified amount of water is added during the charging of the chloro-dehydroxylating agent in the reaction according to Step 1.

6. A process according to any one of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that the specified amount of water is added after charging of the chloro-dehydroxylating agent in the reaction according to Step 1.

7. A process according to claim 1, characterized in that the specified amount of water is 0.3 – 5.0 mg/ml of water immiscible organic solvent.

8. A process according to claim 1, characterized in that the specified amount of water is 0.4 – 2.4 mg/ml of water immiscible organic solvent.

9. A process according to claim 1, characterized in that the specified amount of water is 1.0 – 2.4 mg/ml of water immiscible organic solvent.

10. A process according to any one of claims 1 to 9, characterized in that the reaction according to Step 1 is carried out at a temperature between -5°C and +45°C.

11. A process according to any one of claims 1 to 9, characterized in that the temperature is between -5°C and +35°C.

12. A process according to any one of claims 1 to 9, characterized in that the temperature is between +10°C and +35°C.

13. A process according to any one of claims 1 to 9, characterized in that the temperature is between +25°C and +35°C.

14. A process according to any one of claims 1 to 13, characterized in that the chloro-dehydroxylating agent is thionyl chloride.

15. 5-methoxy-2[[(4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl]thio]-1H-benzimidazole (pyrmetazole) prepared according to any of the claims 1 to 14.